(b) The total quantity of fruits, vegetables and other food items exported is not significant compared to the total production of these items. Hence, it is generally unlikely to have any adverse impact on the domestic market. However, exports will help in maximising farm income and earn foreign exchange for the country.

Import of Recyclable Plastics

1839. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are importing recyclable plastic every month from Europe despite proposed ban on use of carry bags;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the progress on finding a biodegradable substitute for plastic carry bags?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The import of plastic waste and scrap is being regulated in accordance with the Public Notice No. 392-PN/92-97 dated 1st January, 1997, issued by Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, which lays down detailed safeguards and ensures that no toxic/hazardous material is imported. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has issued the Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999. These rules prohibit use of carry bags and containers made of recycled plastics for storing, carrying, dispensing or packaging of food stuffs and do not impose a blanket ban on the manufacture and use of plastic carry bags in the country. Environment friendly materials such as biodegradable plastics are at various states of research and development in the country. The technology for the manufacture of biodegradable plastics is not yet fully commercialised in the country.

Multinational and foreign companies operationg in India

1840. SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of multinational and foreign companies operating in India; and

(b) how many of them are producing or manufacturing consumer goods?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Sir, a total number of 15604 approvals (both financial and technical) have been granted to foreign companies, including multinationals, from August, 1991 to 31st August, 1999 of which 790 have been approved for production/ manufacture of consumer goods, to which the condition of dividend balancing has been applied in consonance with the policy.

Cases filed against SAIL under Anti-Dumping Provisions

1841. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Government filed a case against SAIL under Anti-Dumping Provision in that country;

(b) if so, what steps government have taken against such measures;

(c) how many of such cases have been slapped against the Indian steel producers by the advanced countries in Europe and America, quantity of steel involved in it and the amount of total loss;

(d) whether any retaliatory measures have been taken by the government in such cases; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to stop dumping of steel in India?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Defending Anti-Dumping cases is basically the responsibility of the targetted Indian Companies and the Government of India is not a party to Anti-Dumping proceedings. Government of India, however, provides the necessary advice and assistance to such companies.

(c) The following are the cases currently under investigation against the Indian steel companies:

Sl. No.	Product	Country
1.	Hot Rolled Coils	European Union
2.	Quarto Plates	European Union
3.	Carbon Steel Plates	USA
4.	Carbon Steel Plates	Canada